

# **PROPOSED PROGRAM FRAMEWORK**

**For**

## **MCINTIRE-STENNIS NATIONAL COMPETITIVE MULTI-STATE**

### **FORESTRY RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION**

#### **ALLOCATION PROGRAM**

**In accordance with the FY 2007 President's Budget**

**Report by the McIntire-Stennis Working Group**

#### **Preamble**

The President's FY 2007 Budget Proposal for CSREES-USDA, as presented to the Congress of the United States, calls for an alternative approach to formula-based research programs which would redirect a portion of the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research formula program to nationally, competitively awarded multistate/multi-institutional projects. Under this approach, the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program would transition on October 1, 2006, from funds fully allocated on a formula basis to a new two-tiered mechanism with 41 percent of funds allocated on a formula basis and 59 percent of funds awarded on a competitive basis. It is the responsibility of CSREES-USDA to develop the plan to implement the new, competitive portion of McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program. This includes the draft Request for Applications (dRFA) and continuing the formula base portion of the program at the proposed reduced funding level. The McIntire-Stennis Program is a major portfolio component for addressing CSREES Strategic Goal 5: Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment (go to [www.csrees.usda.gov](http://www.csrees.usda.gov), then see Strategic Planning under About Us for more information).

The National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP) is the organization representing our nation's most prestigious and leading universities engaged in advancing the health, productivity, and sustainability of forests around the world through high quality education, research, outreach, and international programs. Currently, there are 65 NAUFRP institutions receiving McIntire-Stennis support. NAUFRP's considered and public position opposes the President's Budget recommendation and favors the NASULGC<sup>1</sup> proposal which calls for an increase in McIntire-Stennis funding; completion of the in-process national

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<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1887, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) is the nation's oldest higher education association. A voluntary association of public universities, land-grant institutions and many of the nation's public university systems, NASULGC campuses are located in all 50 states, the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. Dedicated to supporting excellence in teaching, research, and public service, NASULGC has been in the forefront of educational leadership nationally for more than a century. See [www.nasulgc.org](http://www.nasulgc.org) for more information.

strategic plan; and a phased implementation of that strategic plan, including both formula (base) funding and competitive funds.

### **Partnership Committee**

While there is a considerable difference between the President's Budget and the NAUFRP position for McIntire-Stennis program in FY 2007, CSREES and NAUFRP agreed to work together in partnership to develop the draft RFA for the proposed competitive portion, and to discuss and consider the many ideas and observations which could become parts of the base and competitive portions. To that end, and in the spirit of the McIntire-Stennis Act which is a partnership authority, the following individuals formed the Partnership Committee:

*Catalino Blanche, CSREES, National Program Leader, Natural Resources and Environment*

*Perry Brown (Co-Chair), U. of Montana and NAUFRP ATR Liaison*

*Don DeHayes, U. of Vermont and NAUFRP President*

*Margaret (Peg) Gale, Michigan Tech and NAUFRP North Central Region Chair*

*Greg Johnson, Weyerhaeuser Company and FRAC Chair*

*Mike Kelly, Virginia Tech and NAUFRP Research Chair*

*Dennis D. Kopp (Co-Chair), CSREES, Assistant Administrator*

*Dan Kugler, CSREES, Deputy Administrator, Natural Resources and Environment*

*H. Rick Meyer, CSREES, National Program Leader, Plant and Animal Systems*

*Mark Poth, CSREES, Research Director, Competitive Programs*

*C.P Patrick Reid, U. of Arizona and NAUFRP Past President*

*Winston S. Sherman, CSREES, Office of Extramural Programs*

Note that the NAUFRP committee members are from land-grant and non-land grant universities; that the forestry schools represented are not all in colleges of agriculture; and that the Forestry Research Advisory Council (FRAC), a twenty member advisory body to the Secretary of Agriculture, is represented. The Partnership Committee began meeting and working March 2006, mainly through weekly conference calls. Two face-to-face meetings were conducted - one in Washington, DC during March 2006, and one in Chicago during May 2006. The Partnership Committee's work concludes with posting of the draft RFA on the CSREES web site.

CSREES greatly appreciates the willingness and cooperation of the NAUFRP organization and FRAC to invest much time and effectual activity in developing the draft RFA. It has been envisioned by the Partnership Committee that the process in itself has advanced cooperation, coordination, and communication.

## **Overview of McIntire-Stennis Program in Accordance with the FY 2007 President's Budget**

Funds will continue to be allocated by CSREES to the eligible institution, whether by formula or by portion of competitive funds. Eligibility and matching requirements (at least 1:1 non-Federal to Federal) remain unchanged, and still apply to both formula and competitive funds.

The 41percent **formula portion** of McIntire-Stennis funds will be allocated to recipient institutions in the first and second quarters so as to preserve programmatic continuity. It is incumbent on each institution to decide what projects will constitute their institution's Program of Research, such as are achievable under the 41 percent formula funding, which begins October 1, 2006. Institutions may choose to continue certain projects or portions of certain projects or even begin new projects, but they must do so under the formula portion of funds. The guidance for acceptability and merit review of these projects remains unchanged.

The 59 percent **competitive portion** of McIntire-Stennis funds will be awarded through a credible, competitive peer review process that identifies fundable projects based on scientific merit and project management capability, as defined in the draft Request for Applications (dRFA). The draft RFA will foster development of new knowledge to meet the needs of forestry and comply with the McIntire-Stennis authority; address stakeholder-identified priorities of national importance; and engage in national priority setting from broad-based stakeholder input, including NAUFRP, FRAC, the National Association of State Foresters, NASULGC, and the U.S. Forest Service. The draft RFA developed by the Partnership Committee describes in detail the competitive program called for in the FY 2007 President's Budget.

# McIntire-Stennis National Competitive Multi-State Forestry Research and Graduate Education Allocation Program

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*Final Outline Draft*

*Version 6.4; 01 June 2006*

*FY 2007 Request for Applications*

APPLICATION DEADLINE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notice: This is a draft outline Request for Applications. Proposals are NOT being accepted for this program.**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**



**Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service**

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE;  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**MCINTIRE-STENNIS NATIONAL COMPETITIVE MULTI-STATE FORESTRY  
RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION ALLOCATION PROGRAM**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.202.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on \_\_\_\_\_ (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). ***[Notice: This document is a draft outline. Do NOT submit applications in response to this DRAFT request for applications.]*** Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFA's for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided for in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the McIntire-Stennis National Competitive Multi-State Forestry Research and Graduate Education Allocation Program RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** CSREES announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the McIntire-Stennis National Competitive Multi-State Forestry Research and Graduate Education Allocation Program (MSNC) for fiscal year (FY) 2007 to promote forestry research and graduate education. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2007 is approximately \$12.9 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for MSNC projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a MSNC project. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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## **PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

Pub. L. 87-778 (76 Stat.806, 16 U.S.C. 582a, et seq.) signed into law on October 10, 1962, is also known as the McIntire-Stennis Act. This law provides the basis for Federal funding of forestry research and graduate education programs at State-certified schools of forestry in the United States. Forestry Research is defined as: reforestation and management of land for the production of crops of timber and other related products of the forest; management of forest and related watershed lands to improve conditions of waterflow and to protect resources against floods and erosion; management of forest and related rangeland for production of forage for domestic livestock and game and improvement of food and habitat for wildlife; management of forest lands for outdoor recreation; protection of forest land and resources against fire, insects, disease, or other destructive agents; utilization of wood and other forest products; development of sound policies for the management of forest lands and marketing of forest products; and such other studies as may be necessary to obtain the fullest and most effective use of forest resources.

In previous years funding was provided to the States through a formula-based allocation process which depended on several factors. First, a base amount (approximately \$25,000) was allocated to each State-certified school; however, this base amount is *excluded* from the formula. The balance of funding to each State was determined through a ranking process and dependent upon the following three factors: 1) forty percent of the remaining balance was allocated based on the area of non-Federal commercial forest land; 2) another forty percent was allocated based upon the volume of timber cut annually from stock; and 3) the remaining twenty percent was allocated based on the total expenditures for forestry research from non-Federal sources.

The President's Budget request for FY 2007 proposes the administration of this program as a combined competitive and formula-based program which translates into \$12.9 million to be awarded competitively (approximately 59% of the total McIntire-Stennis FY 2007 budget) and \$9.1 million distributed as formula allocations (approximately 41% of the total funding), respectively.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

#### **1. State-certified Schools of Forestry**

There are currently 65 McIntire-Stennis State-certified schools of forestry receiving funding. Under this new competitive program CSREES requires the submission of applications to fund multi-State projects which are multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary. A lead institution is expected to apply and manage research and graduate education activities among participating organizations.

#### **2. Forestry Research Advisory Council (FRAC)**

The Forestry Research Advisory Council is required by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, Section 1441(c) to provide advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on accomplishing efficiently the purposes of the McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962. FRAC membership includes representatives from industry, academia, non-profit and public organizations. FRAC provides advice related to the Forest Service research program, authorized by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978. FRAC reports to the Secretary of Agriculture on regional and national planning and coordination of forestry research within the Federal and State agencies concerned with developing and utilizing the Nation's forest resources, forestry schools, and the forest industries. FRAC advises the Secretary of Agriculture on the apportionment of funds for the McIntire-Stennis Program. In the future, priority funding areas will reflect input from FRAC via the Secretary, and adjustments will be incorporated into future RFAs.

### **3. National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP)**

NAUFRP (formerly the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges) represents State-certified schools of forestry and their respective scientists, educators and extension specialists. NAUFRP's purpose is to advance the health, productivity, and sustainability of America's forests by providing university-based natural resource education, research, science, extension and international programs. In addition, NAUFRP is the secretariat for the McIntire-Stennis Administrative-Technical Representative (A-TR) Organization. The A-TR Organization provides ideas and consultation to CSREES regarding the program and its direction, especially focused on long-range planning, program design, and program implementation. Members of the five-member A-TR Committee are drawn from the A-TRs of the various states, giving heed to regional geographic representation. The Chair of the Committee sits on the NAUFRP Executive Committee as the McIntire-Stennis-CSREES Liaison.

### **4. Stakeholder Defined Priority Areas**

The McIntire-Stennis National Competitive Multi-State Research and Graduate Education Allocation Program will provide support for work addressing *new knowledge and forest-based science* as outlined below in the Stakeholder Defined Priority Areas. CSREES seeks novel and innovative proposals that address the health, productivity, and sustainability of forests that emphasize new ideas and approaches that address real societal needs with the potential for high impact.

State-certified schools of forestry must submit multi-State project proposals that are multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary. (See Part VIII, E., Definitions.) Applications should complement CSREES Strategic Goal 5, which is to:

*"Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment."*

The two objectives under Strategic Goal 5 require CSREES to:

- Provide science-based knowledge and education to improve the management of forests and rangelands; and

- Provide science-based knowledge and education to improve the management of soil, air, and water resources to support production and enhance the environment.

The CSREES Strategic Plan may be found at [http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/strat\\_plan.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/strat_plan.html).

Applications for FY 2007 under this competitive program are being solicited only under Priority Areas 4.a. and 4.b. below. Proposals under Priority Areas 4.c. and 4.d. will be solicited in FY 2008, and Priority Areas 4.e. and 4.f. in FY 2009.

**a. New Science of Integration.** All natural resources issues and opportunities include ecological, social, and cultural dimensions and forests are inherently "integrated settings." The development of a "New Science of Integration" would focus on whole system analysis and the development of tools, models, and theories for integrative approaches to natural resources management or cross-cutting analysis of issues relevant to forests. Integration across disciplinary, geographic, and administrative boundaries could be explored.

**b. Forest Ecosystem Services.** Forest ecosystems provide a number of valuable services including, but not limited to, wildlife habitat, recreation, water, carbon sequestration, air quality, human health, human habitation, and the contributions of forest to the global economy and quality of life. We need descriptions, processes, valuation, and full cost/benefit accounting of these services. Results are expected to contribute to the understanding, management, and restoration of ecosystem services and the viability of ecosystem service markets.

**c. Technology Advancements and Applications.** Technological advancements range from global geospatial technological applications to nano-sensors for micro-monitoring. The development of new technologies and applications of advanced technologies that contribute to the convergence of ecology, forests, and people in a systems context are needed.

**d. Human Attitudes and Behaviors--Conflict, Uncertainty, and Decision-Making.** Forests are complex ecological-social systems connected to many conflicting stakeholder needs and interests. Tools are needed to effectively gauge public perceptions and values, and to explore multicultural dimensions of issues. Decision-making frameworks that relate to government structures, disturbance, adaptive management, and analysis of risk and uncertainty are needed.

**e. New Applications for Forests and Forest Products.** There is a demand for sustainable industrial practices and viable "green" business models applied to forest industries. Exploration of new technologies is also needed for areas, such as alternative fibers, bio-energy, and bioremediation that can transform the wood products industry.

**f. Urbanization.** Nearly 80% of the Nation's population lives in urban settings, thus highlighting the need to understand the forest/urban community interface. Urban and

suburban forest ecosystems provide a broad array of critically important services that influence human health and quality of life. It is critical that we enhance our understanding of the relationships of urban communities to forests, including issues related to managing urban and community forests, restoration of impaired ecosystems, and the equitable distribution of forest benefits within communities.

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

In the President's FY 2007 budget, \$21,983,000 is available for the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program. Fifty-nine percent of the budget will be nationally competed, thus approximately \$12.9 million will be available for MSNC projects. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of allotments under this competitive program.

### **B. Types of Applications**

In FY 2007, only new applications may be submitted to the MSNC program. A new application is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the MSNC Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

### **C. Project Types**

#### **1. Types of Projects Funded**

For each of the three project types, Standard Research Projects, Planning and Coordination/Synthesis and Meta-analysis Projects, or Research and Graduate Education Enhancement Projects, it is expected that a single lead institution will submit a multi-State project application (see Part VIII., E., Definitions) or proposal that involves one or more other entities not legally affiliated with the lead institution.

The MSNC Program will fund the following types of multi-State projects that address issues or problems set forth in the Stakeholder Defined Priority Areas in Part I., B.4.a. and b.:

#### **a. Standard Research Projects.**

These projects use the talents of multiple partners across two or more States and institutions in their conduct. The work can be accomplished through a common set of integrated sub-projects or one large project. They could be funded for one to four years.

#### **b. Planning and Coordination/Synthesis and Meta-analysis Projects.**

These projects can be designed for multiple purposes, including research planning and large-scale synthesis and meta-analyses. They can be an effective initial transition tool from formula based funding to competitive funding. These projects could be funded from one to three years.

#### **c. Research and Graduate Education Enhancement Projects.**

These awards are designed to help eligible institutions develop their forestry-related research and educational capabilities. Eligible institutions that have been previously successful in receiving Federal funds for science and forestry research and graduate education are encouraged to partner with institutions that have had limited success. Projects may include career enhancement research projects for selected faculty. Topics chosen should address critical or emerging issues. These projects could be funded from two to four years.

## 2. Application and Allocation Restrictions

A lead institution may submit only one application each fiscal year for funding from either of the two Stakeholder Defined Priority Areas. In other words the lead applicant is limited to submitting two applications per fiscal year. In addition, the total funds allocated to a lead institution under this competitive program for any single fiscal year may not exceed \$1,000,000.

	FY 2007 Stakeholder Defined Priority Areas	
	Column a. <i>The New Science of Integration</i>	Column b. <i>Forest Ecosystem Services</i>
<b>a. Standard Research Projects</b>		
<b>b. Planning and Coordination/Synthesis and Meta-analysis Projects</b>		
<b>c. Research and Graduate Education Enhancement Projects</b>		

Lead institutions are limited to one proposal from each of the two Stakeholder Defined Priority Areas, i.e., one proposal under Column a. *and* one proposal under Column b. A lead institution must be an Eligible Applicant, as specified in Part III, A., and demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project. To demonstrate substantial involvement the lead institution must receive at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the allotted McIntire-Stennis funds for the project funded; and no McIntire-Stennis funded entity may receive less than 10 percent of the allotted funds.

CSREES encourages the participation of non-McIntire-Stennis institutions, when appropriate; however these entities may not be Eligible Applicants and will receive no direct funding (see Part III., A.). Nevertheless, the lead institution must partner with at least one other Eligible Applicant to be eligible to receive an allotment under this competitive program.

No single lead institution may receive more than \$1,000,000 in McIntire-Stennis competitively allotted funding in any single fiscal year.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may be submitted by State-certified schools of forestry as stipulated in accordance with Section 2 of Pub. L. 87-788, McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962. The AT-R for the lead or submitting institution must approve the project by signing off on the transmittal letter, cover page or other equivalent document accompanying the application.

Allotment recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Allotment recipients must provide matching, either cash or in-kind, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, on all Federal funds allotted. It is expected that the lead institution and each participating eligible applicant will certify that it has cost sharing or matching funds available in the event that it receives an allotment under this competitive program. **Applications not demonstrating an ability to cost share or match will not be forwarded to the scientific peer review evaluation panel and will be returned to the lead institution without review.** *Specific certifications as to the availability of cost sharing funds will not be a requirement for proposal submission. However, prior to allocating funds for approved projects the recipient organizations will be required to certify to the availability of cost sharing or matching funds.*

## **PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

Either electronic applications or paper-based applications (utilizing the paper version of the electronic forms) may be submitted to CSREES in response to this RFA.

#### **Electronic Application Package**

If the PD/PI is interested in preparing an electronic application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Organizational Representative to determine if the organization is prepared to submit applications through Grant.gov. See <http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted> for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

To access the electronic application via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, under the “Apply for Grants” heading on the right-hand side of page click on “Download Grant Application Packages,” enter the CFDA number (i.e., 10.202) in the appropriate box to search by CFDA number. From the search results, select the item with CFDA number 10.202. *See Part VIII, F. of this RFA for additional instructions regarding the submission of electronic proposals.*

#### **Paper-based Application Package**

The paper-based application package is available from the following web site [http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/transition/forms\\_tr.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/transition/forms_tr.html). The forms included on this web site are the only forms that are to be used in the preparation of a paper-based application. Applications using any other form will not be accepted for review.

If you do not have electronic access to the application package or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hardcopy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Competitive Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated instructions and application forms for the McIntire-Stennis National Competitive Multi-State Forestry Research and Graduate Education Allocation Program. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to [psb@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:psb@csrees.usda.gov). State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated instructions and application forms for MSNC Program.

### **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Electronic applications should be prepared following the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” Paper-based applications should be prepared following the document entitled, “[A Guide for Preparation and Submission of Paper-based Applications.](#)” These guides are part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA.

#### **1. R&R Other Project Information Form.**

**a. Project Summary/Abstract** (Field 6. on the Form). The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the program.

**b. Project Narrative** (Field 7. on the Form).

The Project Narrative for a McIntire-Stennis National Competitive Multi-State Forestry Research and Graduate Education proposal shall not exceed 15 pages of written text. This maximum (15 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The standard for all printed materials is Times New Roman, 12-point font size. Material should contain one-inch margins and single-spaced text with double spaces between paragraphs and headings. In principle, this page restriction is placed on project proposals to communicate to the authors the need to be succinct. A proposal not meeting these criteria will not be processed for review or approval.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

**Statement of the Issue(s) and Justification.** This section should explain why the work needs to be done, and should include statements on the following points:

- Explain how the proposed project addresses national priorities as cited in Part I., B.
- The importance of the work, and what the consequences are if it is not done.
- The technical feasibility of the research programs.
- The advantages for doing the work as a multi-State effort.
- What the likely benefits will be from successfully completing the work.

**Related, Current, and Previous Work.** Specific reference should be made to related multi-State research projects or other multi-State activities. If there is any apparent duplication, the proposed work should be justified. List essential, cited references. (See subparagraph c. below.)

**Objectives.** Include clear, concise, one-sentence statements for each research or graduate objective arranged in a logical sequence. Include only objectives on which significant progress can be made during the life of the project with the resources committed. Do not specify the exchange of information, the coordination of research, the development of standardized techniques, or joint publication as objectives, as these are to be organized under other types of activities.

**Methods.** Briefly summarize the research methods that will be used to address each of the objectives. Explicit information should be included to enable the reviewers to evaluate the approach. The summary should also allow reviewers to discern joint planning and coordination, the sharing of equipment, possible pooling of data, data analysis, and the multi-State summarization of findings, in other words, show that this is a collaborative effort.

**Facilities and Equipment.** Report and briefly describe all facilities and major equipment or instrumentation which are needed and available for use or assignment to the project during the proposed project period.

**Commitment to Graduate and Post-graduate Student Education and Training.** Report and briefly describe the role and commitment to graduate student education within the project.

**Project Timetable.** Outline all important phases with benchmarks and accomplishments as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the funding period.

**Planned Measurement of Progress and Results.** This section has three purposes. It is intended to show what the products of the research and education will be, how these products will affect the stakeholder or end user, and what critical points of achievement are needed for progress toward meeting objectives. To do this you should address the following items:

*Outputs.* The results of research activities, such as data, information, biological or physical materials, and observations. For example, the output from a plant-breeding program might be a named variety. The output from a survey might be the analyzed survey results.

*Outcomes or Projected Benefits.* Outcomes describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user or stakeholder will benefit. For example, an outcome from the adoption of a new silvicultural practice might be increased production, or greater profitability. Impacts are the economic, social, health, or environmental benefits derived by the intended users. These are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits. An example of an impact would be improved integrated pest management practices that measurably reduced damage by a pest species.

*Milestones or Benchmarks.* Timeline-linked accomplishments need to be completed before subsequent activities can begin, or can be completed. For example, to genetically engineer a tree species by 2012, a transformation method needs to be reduced to practice by 2010 (a milestone).

**Progress Report.** In future years in instances where applicants are requesting renewal support, a progress report must be included within the page limitation set for the Project Narrative portion of the application.

**c. Bibliography and References Cited** (Field 8. on the Form).

All work cited, including that of key personnel, should be referenced in this section of the application.

**d. Other Attachments** (Field 11. on the Form).

**(1). Project Management Plan**

A multi-State application is required. Identify and clearly define the role of the lead institution and the roles of each participating unit involved in the project. Identify how this project is coordinated with the efforts of other State and/or National programs.

*Projected Participation.* Include a completed table of resources utilizing the format on the next page. Present a management plan for the administration of the project including facilitation of communication, planning, and annual report preparation.

***The remainder of this page is purposely left blank.***

## Format for Reporting Projected Participation

For each participant in this activity, include his/her name and e-mail address, employing Institution/agency, and department, plus as applicable:

- For research commitment, indicate the CRIS classifications [Knowledge Areas(s) (KAs), Subject(s) of Investigation (SOI), and Field(s) of Science (FOS)], and estimates of time commitment by Scientists Years (SY) (not less than 0.1 SY), Professional Years (PY), and Technical Years (TY); and
- Objective(s) under which each participant will conduct their studies.

Participant Name and E-mail address	Institution And Department	Research						Graduate Students <small>Post Graduate Students</small>		Project Objectives				
		CRIS Codes			Personnel			FTE	National Program	1	2	3	4	5
		KA	SOI	FOS	SY	PY	TY							
Total SY, PY, TY, and FTE		xxx	xxx	xxx					xxx	x	x	x	x	x

The table above identifies the name and areas of specialization of the researchers and other principal leaders by State and agency/institution. It is also intended to identify the committed average annual input of each cooperating institution in scientist years (SY), professional years (PY), and technical support years (TY). This information is needed to permit others to assess the sufficiency of human resources that are to be devoted to the activity. A minimum of 0.1 SY per participating institution is required and the total resources allocated to the project need to be sufficient to accomplish the stated objectives. The Current Research Information System (CRIS) compatible codes demonstrate the multidisciplinary requirements of AREERA and will assist Administrators in completion of the AD-417 after the project is approved. It will also allow for the classification of the activity within the Federal-State partnership's five goals for USDA.

### (2) Additional Budget Information

The lead institution must submit a SF 424 summary budget. In this part of its application, present a budget for each participating organization. A brief budget narrative justifying each cost should be included in this portion of the submission.

### (3) Project Director Vitae

Provide the vitae of the PD of the lead institution and each co-PD from participating institutions. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable, e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and documentation of administrative capabilities of research and education leadership.

### (4) Collaborative Arrangements

If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

## **2. Supplemental Information Form**

**a. Funding Opportunity (Field 1. on the Form).** Enter McIntire-Stennis National Competitive Multi-State Forestry Research and Graduate Education Allocation Program or MSNC.

**b. Program to Which You Are Applying (Field 2. on the Form).** Enter the program code name (i.e. \_\_\_\_\_) and the program code (i.e. \_\_\_\_\_).

### **C. Submission Date and Time**

Applications must be received by COB on \_\_\_\_\_ (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. **Notice: This is an outline draft RFA. Applications are NOT being accepted for this program.**

### **D. Funding Restrictions**

McIntire-Stennis funds may not be used to fund tuition remission or pay indirect costs.

The use of funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facilities is not allowed. With prior approval, some funds may be used for minor alterations., renovations or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching spaces in order to carry out a funded project.

### **E. Other Submission Requirements**

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the applicable guide for preparation and submission of an application; paper-based applications should be submitted as

specified in the document entitled, “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of Paper-based Applications” and electronic applications should be submitted as specified in the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.”

## **PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

***Note: Each participating organization must demonstrate that it will match the requested Federal funding on a dollar for dollar basis. Applications not demonstrating a willingness to cost sharing or matching will not be forwarded to the scientific peer review panel and will be returned to the lead institution without review.***

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific and/or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) the level of relevant formal scientific, technical education or experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research or education; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific or education fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, State and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority, gender and an equitable professional experience distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of the proposed research and education components of each application to the needs of the general public.

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing multi-State research and education applications submitted in response to this RFA:

#### **1. Project Relevance (30%)**

##### *a. Statement of Issue(s) and Justification*

1. Does the proposal convincingly address the extent of the problem and why the proposed project is important to forests?
2. Does the proposal adequately explain why this research should be conducted by multiple institutions and other entities (e.g., Forest Service/USDA) through a collaborative effort?
3. Does the proposal indicate how the proposed research addresses national priorities?
4. Does the proposal describe the probable impacts from successfully completing the work?

## **2. Scientific Merit (50%)**

### *a. Project Quality*

1. Does the proposal demonstrate novelty, innovation, uniqueness, and originality?
2. Where model systems are used, does the proposal demonstrate ability to transfer knowledge gained from these systems to organisms of importance to U.S. forests?
3. Does the proposal set forth conceptual adequacy of the research and education?
4. Are the objectives clearly delineated?
5. Is the description of the undertaking and suitability and feasibility of methodology adequate?
6. Does the proposal demonstrate feasibility through preliminary data?
7. Does proposal demonstrate probability of success of the project?

### *b. Qualifications of proposed project personnel and adequacy of facilities*

1. Are the qualifications of applicant team to conduct the proposed project, including performance record and potential for future accomplishments adequate?
2. Does the proposal demonstrate an awareness of previous and alternative approaches to the problem and are these identified in the application?
3. Does the proposal demonstrate an institutional experience and competence in subject area?
4. Are obtainable or available support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation adequate?

## **3. Performance (20%)**

### *a. Measurement of Progress and Results*

1. **Outputs:** Does the proposal describe expected outputs from the research and graduate education?
2. **Outcomes and Benefits:** Does the proposal describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user and stakeholder will benefit? Does the proposal adequately explain the potential benefits and impact of the proposed research and graduate education?
3. **Benchmarks:** Does the proposal include statements related to benchmarks; that is, time-linked accomplishments that must be completed before subsequent activities can begin or can be completed?

### *b. Management Plan*

1. Does the proposal include a complete "Project Management Plan" which includes the participation data as required?
2. Are research and education responsibilities of all the participants clearly stated?
3. Does the project represent a multi-State participation, which builds on specific strengths of the participants into a cooperative and complementary project?
4. Does the project include the appropriate mix and balance of disciplinary expertise to address the objectives?

## **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panelists will be made available in such a way that the panelists cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

## **PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make allocations to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the allotment shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. All funds allocated by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are allocated in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the allocation, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

### **B. Organizational Management Information**

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the allocation of funds, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-allocation process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

### **C. Allocation Notice**

An allocation notice will provide pertinent instructions and information. Information regarding the drawdown of funds and additional certifications and representations prior to the release of funding will be communicated to applicants successful under this RFA.

It is the intent of CSREES to allocate funding for approved projects directly to the lead institution and other eligible institutions stipulated in the application for funding.

### **D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to applications considered for review and to projects awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

## **E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

### **1. Annual Performance Report**

An Annual Performance Report must be submitted to the Agency Contact within 90 days after the completion of the first year of the project and annually thereafter during the life of the project. These reports should be succinct and no longer than five (5) pages, single-spaced, using 12-point font. The following information about the project should be included in the report: (1) basic information (i.e. project title, name(s) of PD(s) award number and reporting period); (2) a

description of the stakeholder needs identified, problems addressed, and results of the project (including publications); (3) plans for the upcoming year; and (a description of subaward activity including the process used to select recipients. Any students who work on a project should be listed in the project reports (i.e., report graduate degrees awarded and graduate and post-doctoral individuals trained, as applicable.) A budget summary should be attached to each report to provide an overview of all monies spent during the reporting period.

## **2. Final Performance Report**

A Final Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact person within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. Generally, the Final Performance Report should be a summary of the completed project, including: a review of project objectives and accomplishments; a description of any products and outcomes resulting from the project; activities undertaken to disseminate products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project; future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project; the impact of the project on the project director(s), students, the departments, the institution, and the forestry sciences and education system; and data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The Final Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final Performance Report also must contain any other information which may be specified by the Agency Contact.

## **3. Current Research Information System (CRIS) Reports**

Allocation recipients are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to CRIS. The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submission of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the Agency Contact. Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before CSREES funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>.

Forms approved by CSREES [the AD Series (-416, -417, -419, and -421) and others] will serve as the basis for planning, implementing and reporting an individual institution's contribution to a multi-State activity. Project directors will be responsible for submitting appropriate forms at the initiation of an approved project as described in these guidelines.

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Catalino Blanche, National Program Leader, McIntire-Stennis Program; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U. S. Department of Agriculture; Stop 2210; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D. C. 20250-2210; telephone: 202-401-4190; fax: 202-401-1706; e-mail: [cblanche@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:cblanche@csrees.usda.gov).

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Access to Review Information**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the lead applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

### **B. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the allocation agreement state otherwise, the allocation recipient may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of allocated funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

a. The permissible changes by the, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the allocation recipient or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the allocation document, not the Agency Contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the allocation recipient and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the allocation recipient and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the allocation recipient and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise.

e. The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the

ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an allocation of funds, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **D. Regulatory Information**

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

### **E. Definitions**

*Administrative Project means a component of the Eligible Institution's Research Program specifically authorizing expenditure of McIntire-Stennis funds for research planning and other activities directly associated with effective administration of the McIntire-Stennis Program.*

*Administrative-Technical Representative (A-TR) means the official responsible for forestry research under the McIntire-Stennis Act at each State-certified institution eligible to participate in the McIntire-Stennis program. The A-TR is appointed by the highest executive officer of the participating institution and is not a Federal employee.*

*Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.*

*Authorized departmental officer means the Secretary or any employee of the Department with delegated authority to issue or modify award instruments on behalf of the Secretary.*

*Authorized organizational representative means the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization or the official, designated by the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.*

*Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.*

*Cash contributions means the applicant's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the applicant by non-Federal third parties.*

*College or University means an educational institution in any State which: (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate; (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; (3) provides an educational program for which a baccalaureate degree or any other higher degree is awarded; (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.*

*Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.*

*Eligible applicant (see State-certified school of forestry)*

*Eligible institution (see State-certified school of forestry)*

*Forest sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, education, and teaching activities in the renewable natural resources, forestry, economics, policy and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities relating to the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of forestry related products and services, and inclusive of programs in natural resources, forestry, and closely allied disciplines.*

*Forestry school is an academic unit offering a State-approved graduate curriculum leading, at a minimum, to a Master of Science in forestry, or a Master of Forestry or any graduate degree in the specific field of forestry such as wood science, forest products, forest engineering, urban forestry, agroforestry, forest biotechnology and the like. Existing eligible institutions need not be reviewed for adherence to the definition.*

*Governor's designee means a person in the State designated by the State's Governor who is empowered to certify eligible institutions for funds under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act and who shall determine the proportionate amount available for each institution therein.*

*In-kind contributions means non-cash contributions of property or services provided by non-Federal third parties, including real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property, directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a McIntire-Stennis funded project or program.*

Insular Area means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Integrated means scientific research that deals with whole system analysis and the development of models, tools, and theories for the advancement of understanding of the ecological, social and cultural dimensions of natural resources management. Integrated research will recognize that forests are inherently integrated settings that simultaneously involve communities, economics and environmental interactions that determine future status.

Land-grant colleges and universities means those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862 (12 Stat. 503-505, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 301-305, 307 and 308), including the land-grant institutions in the Insular Area; or the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 417-419, as amended; U.S.C. 321-326 and 328), including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University.

Matching funds means those non-Federal funds (and the value of qualified in-kind contributions) made available by an eligible institution for forestry research which are used to meet the matching requirements specified in the McIntire-Stennis Act.

McIntire-Stennis Act means the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act of October 10, 1962 (16 U.S.C. 582a- 582a-7).

Multi-State project application means a application for a project: (1) which must involve the applicant or lead institution working in cooperation with **one or more** eligible applicants; (2) that may involve other schools, colleges, universities, community colleges, junior colleges, units of State government, agencies of the Federal government, private sector organizations, or a consortium of institutions; and (3) where the lead institution and each eligible applicant demonstrate substantial involvement and assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project. **To demonstrate substantial involvement, the lead institution must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the allotted McIntire-Stennis funds, and no participating eligible institution may receive less than 10 percent of allotted funds.**

Non-Federal funds mean those funds from other than Federal sources and may include in-kind contributions as well as cash. As used in this context, the term is generally referred to as Non-federal Funds Expended for Forestry Research. These are Non-Federal Funds expended on research projects, in CRIS, adjusted by the forestry percentage on CRIS FORM AD-417. FORM AD 419 provides the financial data for determining the apportionment to the States and eligible institutions.

Outcomes means specific, measurable project results and benefits that, when assessed and reported, indicate the project's plan of operation has been achieved.

Peer reviewers means experts or consultants qualified by training and experience to give expert advice on the scientific and technical merit of applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the application evaluation criteria. Peer reviewers may be ad hoc or convened as a panel.

Plan of Operation means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's outcomes. At a minimum, the plan should include a timetable indicating how outcomes are achieved, a description of resources to be used or acquired, and the responsibilities expected of all project personnel.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an Authorized Departmental Officer.

Program of Research (see Research Program)

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by an award.

Project director means the single individual designated by the applicant organization and approved by the Authorized Departmental Officer who is responsible for the direction and management of the project [also known as a principal investigator for research activities].

Project period means the total length of time, as stated in the allocation document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Research means any systematic study directed toward new or fuller knowledge and understanding of the subject studied.

Research activity means a scientific investigation or inquiry that results in the generation of knowledge.

Research capacity means the quality and depth of an institution's research infrastructure as evidenced by its faculty expertise in the natural or social sciences, scientific and technical resources, research environment, library resources, and organizational structures and reward systems for attracting and retaining first-rate research faculty or students at the graduate and post-doctorate levels.

Research program or program of research means a list of approved projects which defines the research to be conducted by an Eligible Institution with McIntire-Stennis funds within a given fiscal year.

Research project means a component of the Eligible Institution's Research Program having specific objective(s), defined research procedures, specific date of initiation, and a projected date of completion.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved may be delegated.

*State means any one of the 50 States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.*

*State-certified school of forestry, eligible institution or eligible applicant means the institution(s) in each State which have been certified as eligible to receive McIntire-Stennis formula funds by the Governor or the Governor's designee. These institutions may be either 1) land-grant colleges or agricultural experiment stations established under the Morrill Act of July 2, 1862 (7 USC 301 et seq.) as amended or 2) other State-supported colleges and universities offering graduate training in the sciences basic to forestry and having a forestry school.*

*United States means the several States, the District of Columbia, the territories and possessions, including the Insular Area.*

## **F. CSREES' Grants.gov Implementation Plans**

**USDA will be requiring FY2007 proposals to be submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](http://grants.gov). This is a significant change, and applicants need to be prepared. Information about the new forms and submission requirements for [Grants.gov](http://grants.gov) can be found in Part IV. Proposals must be submitted via [Grants.gov](http://grants.gov) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, on the program deadline as indicated under Part IV, C. of this program solicitation.**

USDA electronic application submissions consist of forms and attachments. The CSREES MSNC program will only accept attachments in portable document format (PDF). Reviewers will not be provided non-PDF files in the review process.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. On the Grants.gov Customer Support webpage (<http://grants.gov/CustomerSupport>) users will find a link to "Convert Documents to PDF" (<http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>). PDF documents submitted as a part of the application must also adhere to the following guidelines:

- margins not less than 1"; 2.5 cm all sides
- type at least 12 point font size regardless of whether it is single or double spaced.

Proposals that do not follow the guidelines for attachments stated above may not be accepted into the program and may be returned without review.

## **G. DUNS Number**

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to

<http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

## **H. Required Registration for Grants.gov**

The Central Contract Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. Such organizations must register in the CCR prior to the submission of applications via grants.gov (a DUNS number is needed for CCR registration). For information about how to register in the CCR visit the “Get Started” section at <http://www.grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.